

Brief

MEMORANDUM OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION SUBMITTED BY
THE ALBERTA JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE
RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION BROTHERHOODS



Edmonton, Alberta,
January 22, 1954.

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The Honourable the Premier
and Members of the Cabinet,
Province of Alberta.

Honourable Sirs:

This Joint Legislative Committee of Railway Transportation
Brotherhoods of Alberta, appreciate another opportunity of appearing before
you to submit, for your consideration, the views of our organizations.

Since we last appeared before you, we note with sincere regret,
of the untimely deaths of two of your colleagues: Honourable Dr. J. L. Robinson
and the Honourable D. A. Ure. Their counsel and judgement will be sorely
missed, both by the Government and the people of the Province.

Some of the matters placed before you in this Memorandum are
not new. We feel that our reasons for proposing them are sound. We therefore
submit them for your careful consideration.

1. PUBLIC HEALTH.

We desire to commend your Government for the continued progress in the field of Public Health Services. This is pointed up by the recent announcement of further aid to Polio victims, whereby the Government will pay all the costs of treating Polio patients during the 14 day quarantine period. Reports indicate that you are considering the construction of a 200 bed rehabilitation hospital for these unfortunate citizens. The extension of hospital facilities by the Government denotes that excellent progress is being made in providing hospitalization services for the people.

We are still watching with keen interest the progress made by the Federal and Provincial Governments toward establishing an effective health plan for all Canadian people. We are encouraged by the progress made in co-operative effort in this great objective and believe your full support is assured.

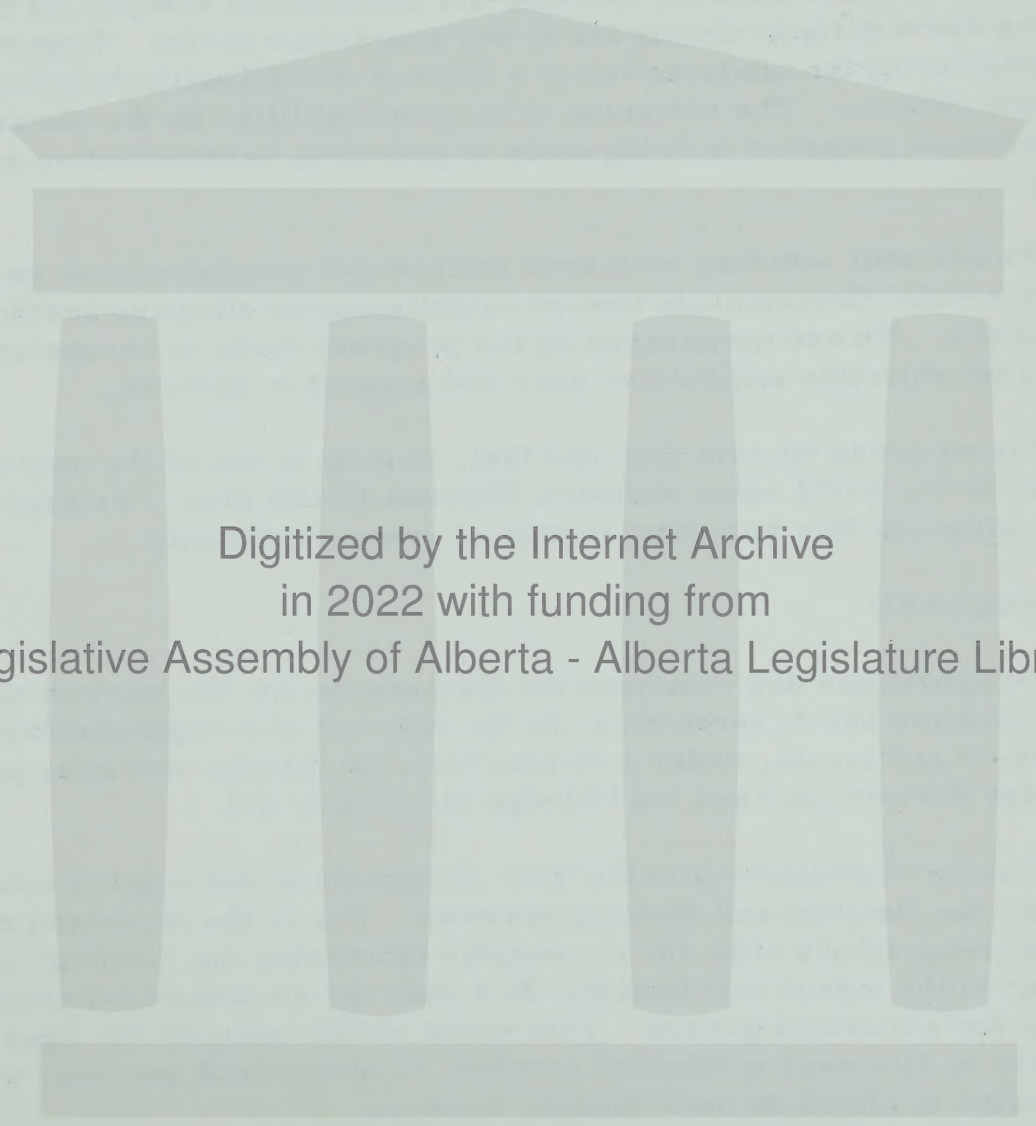
Recent press reports disclose that, Canada is one of the only two major countries in the world today without a National Health plan. We urge your Government to progress this important matter at every opportunity.

2. PUBLIC WELFARE

We appreciate and commend the Government for the interest and practical consideration shown heretofore, by the payment of a supplementary allowance of \$10.00 per month, under a Means Test, to citizens receiving pensions under the Old Age Security Act and the Old Age Assistance Act.

Present regulations provide that, recipients of the supplementary allowance qualify for Hospital and Medical services. Due to the increased cost of living, we would respectfully urge you to consider increasing the "ceiling" on income specified in the means test to \$1400.00 a year for an unmarried person and \$2000.00 a year for a married person. This would enable many of our aged citizens, who are in dire need of Medical service, to obtain such service, which they are now unable to afford on their meager incomes.

We desire to record our appreciation for the enactment of legislation, at the last session, providing pensions for disabled persons. However, we would recommend and urge that you give consideration to increasing the pension to \$50.00 per month. This would correspond with the amount paid to recipients under the Old Age Assistance Act, together with supplementary allowance. We would also urge that the maximum income allowed under the regulations be increased to \$1400.00 per year for an unmarried person and \$2000.00 for a married person.



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Regarding the Widows Pension Act, we believe that, on account of the decreased purchasing power of the dollar, that consideration should be given to increasing the pension to \$50.00 per month, and raising the "ceiling" on income, as specified in the Act, to \$1400.00 per year.

3. HOUSING

The housing shortage in Canada is still a national emergency, second only to the national defence program, and should be so regarded. We recognize the interest of your Government in connection with this gigantic problem. Despite the advantages of assistance under the Municipal Assistance Act and the Self-Liquidating Projects Act, we urge your Government to give further consideration to exploring all avenues of assistance, to meet the problem of making available, to the low wage earner, more economical housing.

4. EDUCATION

The progress made in the direction of improving education in this Province is highly commendable. Together with other representative bodies, we are keenly interested in improving in every possible manner the educational facilities and advantages of the future citizens of Canada.

The Students Assistance Act, enacted at the last session, designed to assist students of academic merit who, without financial aid, cannot proceed with their education beyond the level of the Secondary School, has our full support.

We recognize the need for the continual expansion of school and educational facilities, with the attendant costs, and lend our support thereto.

5. MARGARINE

In connection with this food commodity, data now available shows that consumption has increased from year to year. We suggest that, the section in the Margarine Act prohibiting the manufacturer to add colouring be repealed, so as to permit colouring to be added prior to offering this commodity for sale.

6. ELIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF LEVEL CROSSINGS.

We have for several years made representation in the interest of safety on this question. The hazards at level crossings of the highways and railways, have proportionately increased with the increased mileage of improved roads, the number, dimensions and speed of motor vehicles.

We are pleased to learn that the Federal Government by Order-In-Council No. 52 has directed the Board of Transport Commissioners for Canada to make a thorough investigation of the railway-highway crossing problem. We await with interest the Board's report on this important matter. We feel assured that your Government will co-operate to the fullest extent, you consistently can, in implementing the Board's recommendations to eliminate accidents at level crossings.

While discussing this subject, we would like to draw attention to the inadequate crossing protection provided, while unloading highway gravel last fall, one half mile west of Wildwood station. We would suggest that, in the future, proper protection be provided by requiring the use of men who are qualified crossing flagmen.

7. REGULATIONS OF HIGHWAY TRANSPORT.

We desire to reiterate our views on this matter. For many years this Committee and its counterpart in other provincial and federal jurisdictions have made representations on this subject, with a view particularly, that co-operative action might be developed by which a National Transportation policy could be formulated.

We understand that the Privy Council has concluded its hearings on the question of Federal vs Provincial jurisdiction of Motor Vehicle traffic on Canadian highways. The decision of the Court, on this important question, is awaited with interest.

8. HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT

Figures released by the Alberta Safety Council reveal that, Highway accidents are increasing at an alarming rate. In 1953 it is reported that, there were 17,832 accidents with 239 deaths, compared to 14,717 accidents with 196 deaths in 1952.

The need for improved road facilities as a public necessity and convenience is fully recognized. The increased mileage of our paved highways and improved roads, the related speed and volume of motor traffic, the number of accidents and those anticipated, emphasize the need for additional safety regulations.

In this connection it is recommended:

- A. Many of these accidents are caused by vehicles standing on the highway without proper lights or danger signals. We would suggest that the law be amended to provide that all vehicles, when stopped on the highway, be required to display safety devices which have been approved by the Highway Department.
- B. We urge consideration of allotting time on High School curriculums for Driver Training courses.
- C. That buses and trucks using main highways be required to clear the traffic lanes when stopping to pick up or discharge passengers or commodities.
- D. Strict enforcement of regulations prohibiting the operation of trucks on Sundays. Also, because of size, the regulations governing the speed of trucks and buses be strictly enforced.
- E. That the speed limit be a maximum of 50 miles per hour at night and not to exceed 60 miles per hour in the day time.
- F. That the transportation of inflammable fluids and explosives by trucks come under regulations similar to those issued by the Board of Transport Commissioners for Canada, covering the transportation of such materials by the railways.
- G. When, for any purpose, red colored lights or signs are used adjacent to the railways, such lights or signs shall be hooded to prevent railway employees confusing them with signals governing railway operation.

Floodlights on industrial properties adjacent to the railways to be so arranged as to not dim or obscure the color indication of automatic block signals or other fixed signals. And also, lights located at or near highway crossings at grade to be arranged so as not to interfere with the vision of enginemen in properly seeing approaching highway traffic.

- H. That the Act be amended so as to make it compulsory for all automobile owners to carry automobile insurance, covering public liability and property damage.
- I. The action of the appropriate authorities, in their program, to regulate the loads and weights of trucks using our highways is commendable. In this connection we recommend a strict enforcement of the regulations. It is recognized that the size and potential carrying capacity of the trucks have gone beyond the ability of the roads to carry them. The costly investment in the highways should be adequately protected by requiring commercial vehicles to pay sufficient taxes to compensate for the wear and damage to the highways.

The announcement, last summer, by Highway Minister Honourable Gordon Taylor, that the Government has launched an experiment in road building in the Clyde area is welcomed. Also, the interest in the Idaho road experiments, indicates that the question of the effect of heavily loaded trucks on the highway is considered of paramount importance.

We trust that when the results of the experiments are fully known that, adequate taxes will be imposed on heavily loaded vehicles to compensate for the wear and damage to our highways.

9. JURY DUTY

It is considered that the present allowance to citizens called for Jury duty is insufficient. We recommend that the amount be increased to \$12.00 per day, or the amount lost from regular employment, if greater.

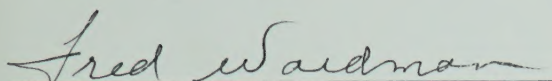
10. WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

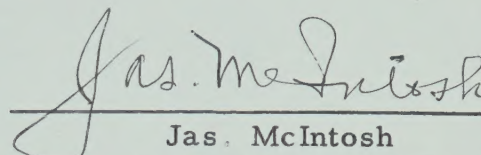
In 1951 this Committee submitted a brief to the Special Committee appointed by the Legislature to consider amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act. We then outlined our reasons for the changes proposed. As our proposals were not implemented to the extent of what we considered reasonable, we again suggest the following changes:

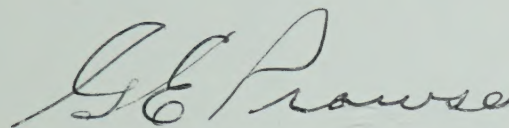
1. The maximum figure on which to base compensation to be increased to \$4000.00.
2. Pensions paid to widows to be increased to \$75.00 per month.


We have endeavoured to place before you, the views of those we represent, and we trust that the proposals will receive your favorable consideration.


Respectfully submitted,


Fred Wardman
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers


Jas. McIntosh
Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen


G.E. Prowse
Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen
and Enginemen.


F.C. McLean
Order of Railroad Telegraphers


H. Kobe
Brotherhood of Maintenance
of Way Employees.

